Demand for Reduction in Import Duty on Ferro-Nickel

2425. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the steel manufacturers have asked the Government to reduce import duty on ferro-nickel;

(b) if so, the steps taken to examine and consider the proposal to lower the duty on ferro-nickel; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Representations have been received from some sections of the steel industry seeking reduction in import duty on ferro-nickel. Ministry of Steel makes recommendations to Ministry of Finance on duty matters before formulation of the budget proposals every year. The suggestions/representations received in this regard are duly considered while formulating the recommendations. The recommendations for the year 1997-98 are yet to be finalised by Ministry of Steel.

MNCs in the Mining Sector

2426. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have invited multinational foreign companies to invest in the mining sector in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of such companies;

(c) the details of the companies which have sent their proposals;

(d) the terms and conditions of the proposed, agreements; and

(e) the time by which these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The National Mineral Policy, 1993, envisages, *inter-alia,* private investment both domestic and foreign in the Mineral Sector. Foreign technology and investment is required particularly for the exploration of high value and scarce minerals.

(c) to (e) In the mining and metallurgical sector from January to September, 1996, the Foreign Investment Promotion Board has decided upon 32 proposals of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in which the proposed foreign investment' is of the tune of Rs. 668 crores. The Central Government does not maintain a record of applications/proposals made by companies to different State Governments.

Grant of Prospecting Licence (PL) and Mining Lease (ML) is governed by the terms and conditions provided in the Mines & Minerals [Regulation & Development] Act, 1957 and the rules made thereunder.

Criticism of Indian Goods by the Delegates of Uganda Business Community

2427. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of Uganda's business community on a visit to India has criticized the inferior quality of Indian goods exported to Uganda and has termed Indian traders as cheats (as reported in the Times of India dated 20th November, 1996 — Mumbai edition);

(b) whether they have said that Indian goods particularly machinery, food items and textiles are of poor quality as compared to other countries' goods; and

(c) the steps proposed by the Government to ensure that Indian goods' quality is improved and they are accepted abroad and have good demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The Govt, have noted the news-item nomenclatured 'Indians send worst goods